



*"From witches and wizards
And long-tailed buzzards,
And creeping things that run in hedge-bottoms.
Good Lord, deliver us."*

Cornish Litany

Karmaphala Karma: Scared to Life and Death

Why fear is so important to us.

A Halloween Commentary

*"From ghoulies and ghosties and
Long legged beasties, and things that go
Bump in the night.
Good Lord, deliver us."*

Cornish Litany

A story and a word from my Master:

A man walking in the night slipped and fell from a rocky path. Afraid he would fall down thousands of feet, because he knew that just at the edge of the path was a very deep valley, he grabbed hold of a branch that was overhanging the edge. In the darkness of night all he could see below him was a bottomless abyss. He shouted and his own shout was reflected back- there was nobody to hear him.

You can imagine that man, and his night of torture. Every moment there was death below, his hands were becoming cold, he was losing his grip...but he managed to hold on, and as the sun came out he looked down...and he laughed! There was no abyss. Just six inches below his feet there was a rock ledge. He could have rested the whole night, slept well-the edge was big enough-but instead, the whole night was a nightmare.

"From my own experience I can say to you:

The fear is not more than six inches deep. Now it is up to you whether you want to go on clinging to the branch and turn your life into a nightmare, or whether you would love to leave the branch and stand on your feet. There is nothing to fear."

Fear is very important! It encumbers us with the ties that bind us to the lesser part of our humanity and is used to motivate our survival through hate, as well as to entertain us all throughout our lifetime with the intrigue of movies, sports and human drama! All this fear offers us, along with the gratification of pride, is the vengeance of self-righteousness. If not for fear there would be no human mischief!

Fear is what makes our personal lives antagonistic enough to cause our living to appear "interesting," by fulfilling the sickness of our pathological need for dominance and conflict which we have created through our struggle for existence via spiritual ignorance; giving us what we believe is our all important motivation to survive as a product of our DNA in this world at all costs.

Now saying all of this, I am sure many of you would take exception. But if you look deeper into fear, you will see that it is what plays in the background of our motivations and makes every decision in our life for us, without our awareness or acknowledgement. Fear is an assumed reality that must be considered in every verdict that we come to about ourselves, others and what to do in this world that we would believe is "good," or at least in our "best interests."

Sad to say that fear is central within us and has our total acceptance of its reality and importance in our lives as an absolute necessity. Fear is the breath of our DNA and we generally find it difficult to ignore. It is the criteria for all judgments, life commitments and personal perceptions. Fear is the basis of our entire lifetime and it shapes us into the people, communities and nations that we live in on this blessed planet. It is the one aspect of the human being that is NEVER questioned by the pedestrian mentality, as it is considered "natural," helpful and even "good."

I will never forget the man in Poway who was a Sponsor for many years and attended my Discourses in Escondido many years ago when I was teaching formally. He told me he was a *meditator* and a *student of insight*. He wrote me a question for Satsang (radio) where he asked me how much "fear" he should keep in order to be safe in this world.

It was assumed by him that "fear" is a quality that one keeps in calculated measures in order to secure happiness and safety. His question was basically, how does one incorporate this into a spiritual practice? My answer was straight and direct, as this was at the time the stupidest question I have ever had put to me, and of course he immediately got insulted, never spoke to me again and stopped being a Sponsor. Such are the fearful. They will live and die to protect their precious state of fear while defending and supporting the ills of this world with self-righteousness, which is one of the benefits of being fearful.

If we are honest, we can see that our whole life typically can be summed up through the futile effort of seeking to avoid fear through obsession with gratification. Many of us have created pathologies of avoidance through pseudo forms of philosophy that breed emotional appeasements as the way out of this maze of mental illness. Through this conjecture in which we come to believe, erroneously, that we are learning how not to be afraid, we are in fact living to sustain ourselves in the psychology and its pathology of an anxiety in which most of us human beings will live our entire life due to the state and intensity of our fears.

Fear is an emotionality that cannot be avoided because we live in a body that has as its genetic link the ancestry of our forefathers, nothing but a cellular history of violence due to fear itself and the hate that is fear's offspring. It is all about survival of the fittest, or in this case the word "fit" translates into "cruel."

Fear breeds hate. It takes thousands of lifetimes for most of us to realize the Truth of this condition and this state of mind. This is what the enlightened Souls come to teach us; that we have options. But we are skeptical about giving up our fear and its hate for the sake of Love. We are just downright defiant about it all.

We ignore the teachings of Love for the sake of sustaining our pride through the atrophy of our fear. So with this hubris, we keep on keeping on with our genetic desires for pleasures and comforts as a way of neutralizing the fear; and fears that we refuse to acknowledge have so much control over our lives.

Imagine if you will, that we admit the level and degree of our fears to ourselves or to anyone. Our world would look so different. People would be so confused about who they are and how to present themselves to others in order to survive in both the world and society. Our paranoia would bloom, as well as our hidden "weaknesses," and we would be exposed to the world for all to see—so we think.

Then the *vultures* of our society (this can include financial institutions, our boss at work, our family, and anyone else who has a bone to pick with us—pun intended☺) would come and pick at our body (our lives) causing us great humiliation, of which we seem to fear most in this world.

I have fear living as a "Gregory;" you have fear living as a "you." Animals have fear for they know they are food for another animal, Darwin's theory of natural selection being implemented here. Fear comes with having a body and placing it in a world where we live off each other's flesh both metaphorically and physically. You see in this world we must have a body in order to fulfill our Karma.

Listen to Lao-Tzu Chapter 13 as he talks about the human condition and how the body (emotionality) plays into everything that we live for.

*Accept disgrace willingly.
Accept misfortune as the human condition.*

*What do you mean by "Accept disgrace willingly"?
Accept being unimportant.
Do not be concerned with loss and gain.
This is called "accepting disgrace willingly."*

What do you mean by "Accept misfortune as the human condition"?

*Misfortune comes from having a body.
Without a body, how could there be misfortune?*

*Surrender yourself humbly; then you can be trusted to care for all things.
Love the world as your own self; then you can truly care for all things.*

How many of us would “surrender” ourselves “humbly” in order to transcend our fears? Hmm. To surrender ourselves to Love, as the Master speaks of here, is just not a part of the culture of fear that we live so vibrantly in. Rather we are fighters who live for “an eye for an eye...” in order to sustain our self-righteousness and pride in the culture of fear that we have created in this society. Love has no place in our world except as an assumed gratification through pleasure.

Fear is very important to our ill state of mind, which is magnifying our emotionality. So what would you like to be known for in this world? A person who no one messes with because you are a “take no shit” kind of person? Or as a person of Love who surrenders, what others would say is being foolish? Whether we are aware of it or not, this question is being asked of us as a constant in our daily living. How we answer the call...of this becomes either the state of our fear or the essence of Love, and both of these reflect in our Karma.

Our Karma is created as we choose to live in the absolute crudeness of a seemingly justified fear. This fear is related to the human experience of natural selection, which is that we live off the inner and outer flesh of others in order to sustain and elevate ourselves monetarily and socially in this society. Allow me to explain through illogic that might be totally against your basic instinct to survive, and yet causes the Karma we have to grow into a real problem for the human part of us.

Let us say there is a “Mom and Pop” hardware store in your neighborhood. You have gone there for years to maintain your home. Then one day a Home Depot arrives and it not only has everything you need to keep your home comfortable and safe, but also has new stuff you have never seen before and, of course, is less expensive than the “Mom and Pop” place you went to for years.

What do we do? Well, money is survival to most people (the flesh) so we go to the place that is cheaper and has more stuff. This seems to be a no-brainer for most people and is supported by our logic and reasoning. It is the natural selection of business. So the issue is that we are foolish to our logic, which is based in fear, to spend more money being loyal to the “Mom and Pop” store when we can get it cheaper at Home Depot. Plus we see everyone else making the decision to go with Home Depot and think to ourselves, “Well they can’t all be wrong,” as we believe in “safety in numbers” which the pedestrian mentality thrives in.

So our Karma begins to occur through the fear of paying more when we could pay less. So, with all fearful logic intact, we are more than willing to kill the “Mom and Pop” hardware store for the convenience and savings of a Home Depot. One could argue that the “Mom and Pop” store is outmoded and that they need to upgrade and become competitive. It is that “every man for himself” mentality.

But what we are doing here is more than being logical and sensible. The issue is beyond logic and reasoning and reducing our obsessive anxiety over survival through money. It boils down to the fear that we will have less money, which translates to the fear of our survival if we shop the “Mom and Pop” place rather than the cheaper Home Depot.

What we have done by being “smarter” is appeased our fears through the insecurity that eventually leads to the conclusion that attaining to the state of mind which tells us that we can overcome our insecurity through being what we call “practical” is the “good” use of fear in our lives.

So our rationalizations become the voice of the pedestrian mentality that is constantly droning in the background of our unconscious minds the mantra of: ***don't spend more money than you have to***. But the damage we do to ourselves by taking this stand (of rational fear) is that we cause our Karma to seemingly oppose us.

Of course, we could NEVER see it this way in our minds, but it is true. We believe that it is smarter to get more for our money than to see the bigger picture of what is really happening to ourselves through being **penny wise and Karma foolish**. The Laws of Love elude us here because we simply do not want to give up our basic insecurity (which is due to unrequited emotionality of fear) for the sake of unconscionable Love.

Fear is far more reasonable to us than is Love.

This fact of fear being more sensible to us than Love is the issue of not only our personal lives, but of the world as a whole. Fear can be easily modified through logic as reasonable and necessary. Fighting for what is “right” through fear and hate is much more appealing than doing what Lao-tzu would suggest; ***Accept disgrace willingly*** and living for the illogic of a compassion that onlookers would ridicule.

Writing this to you reminds me of an interview I recently watched with the boxer George Foreman where he recounts the greatest punch in boxing history that was never thrown. All due to the compassion and Love of the man known in this world as Muhammad Ali, who showed a great Love over fear and saved Foreman's life.

I once knew Muhammad Ali. I loved him so very much. He was not a boxer. He was a man of great Love.

The movie that I was watching was “Facing Ali” where George Foreman talked about the greatest punch in boxing history that was **never** thrown and how grateful he was to Ali for never delivering it. It was the fight known of as the “Rumble in the Jungle.” At the end of the fight, George Foreman talks about the punch that Ali could have thrown to absolutely destroy him.

But Ali, being Ali, held back and never threw it. You can see it in the video where Foreman is going down to the canvas and Ali retracts the deadly blow that most boxers, Foreman admits including himself, would have thrown had the roles been reversed. There was no need; Foreman was much more exhausted than hurt when he was counted out with only two seconds of the round to go. When I watched how Foreman talked about it so eloquently, I cried. It was so moving and typical of the man I once knew in my life named Muhammad Ali.

Over the years George Foreman revised his opinions about Muhammad Ali and his bout with him on several accounts, declaring, “We fought in 1974, that was a long time ago. After 1981, we became the best of friends. By 1984, we loved each other. I am not closer to anyone else in this life than I am to Muhammad Ali.” He stated, “Then, in 1981, a reporter came to my ranch and asked me: ‘What happened in Africa, George?’

I had to look him in the eye and say, “I lost. He beat me.” Before that I had nothing but revenge and hate on my mind, but from then on it was clear. “I'll never be able to win that

match, so I had to let it go." He eventually endorsed the conclusion about Muhammad Ali that, "He's the greatest man I've ever known. Not greatest boxer. That's too small for him. He has a gift. He's not pretty; he's beautiful. Everything America should be, Muhammad Ali is."

George Foreman learned the meaning and the blessing of Lao-Tzu's teaching:

Accept disgrace willingly.

All of this is so true. Love makes Life clear. Fear confounds the mind with the contradictions of the genetic heart that tell us that hate is more powerful than Love.

Here is the perfect story, much read by many of you, about the Zen master who faced the fear of his death and, like George Foreman, never needed or received the final punch. I hope this story falls into the compassion of your Heart and offers you a new meaning to this old story.

During the time of civil war in Korea, a certain general led his troops through province after province, overrunning whatever stood in his path. The people of one town, knowing that he was coming and having heard tales of his cruelty, all fled into the mountains.

The general arrived in the empty town with his troops and sent them out to search the town. Some of the soldiers came back and reported that only one person remained, a Zen Master. The general strode over to the temple, walked in, pulled out his sword, and said, "Don't you know who I am? I am the one who can run through you without batting an eye."

The Zen master looked back and calmly responded, "And I, sir, am one who can be run through without batting an eye." The general, hearing this, bowed and left.

The Master was ready to die. The facts were obvious and he was willing to accept the fear totally by embracing it. On the other hand, he also knew that the General was a man of low self-esteem (a very dangerous quality in human beings) and that all he really wanted was "respect" for his primitive powers of inducing death over life. The master gave him this without hesitation, again accepting everything as it is. The Karma was clear to the Master. He was there to meet this General with acceptance for what the situation was offering.

Fear will never go away as long as we have a body. Fear is intrinsic to our bodies. Trying to make it "go away" or disappear totally is simply foolish and impossible. The key is to find that acceptance of all elements of our life experience as the antidote to fear. Buddha talked about how the body trembles in the face of death and harm and how arrogant it can be when it is being adorned by pleasure. This insight is important.

To understand the nature of the body and to accept the body for what it is, causes us to live in a Love that allows everything to be just what it is and frees us to recognize the facts of all of this through consciousness. Ah, the simple beauty of it all.

Acceptance is Love.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE WEEK:

Wisdom would have it that we do not allow for fear to be such a deterrent to Love. Hence, this week why not just accept that the body is fear and that you are something other than fear itself?

You are that which can realize the fear of the body and the Love of the Soul. Learning how to recognize the difference brings insight, kindness and beauty into our lives.

It is as simple as knowing that the Body is fear and the Heart is Love. You make the choice of which one you will live from.



Love is Fearlessness

"Chaos is inherent in all compounded things. Strive on with diligence."

Buddha

The chaos that we live in comes from the duality that the mind creates due to being split by its "knowledge" of itself that lives and believes in fear and hopes for Love. The elements of our confusion and how we betray ourselves come from the basic fact that the human can never be divine. In other words, the human, that is full of fear, can never know the spiritual Love that exists in the midst of itself.

This is our basic mistake in the humanity that we have created through ignorance, willfulness and indifference towards Love. **We insist that the human can know Love. It CAN'T.** Here is where most of us deviate from reality. So we manufacture an ideal of what we want love to be and just call it done. This is what opens the door to fear and hate. For the idyllic "love" that we have manufactured from the ego is simply a matter of hubris, and not consciousness.

Fear is the heartbeat of the human. Our DNA and our genetics contain nothing but primitive emotionality that is meant to help us survive as a species and is not the means for maturing as a spiritual being. The human is human and the divine is divine. The two are not the same.

A man named Nicodemus, who himself was a teacher, came to Jesus in the middle of the night to ask him questions about how Jesus performed the signs and doings of what Nicodemus thought of as a man of "God." Nicodemus was a member of the Jewish ruling council and was a huge muck amuck of his time. So he was sent to find out if Jesus was a magician or someone sent from "God." He wanted to find out what Jesus' secrets were and how he did what he did!

Jesus, knowing this was a trap, said to Nicodemus:

Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."

Then dear ol' Nicodemus asked the stupid question:

"How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"

Jesus' answer was more than Nicodemus could handle. Listen:

Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

What is "flesh" is of the flesh and what is Spirit is of the Spirit. The "flesh" in this context is about DNA and genetics. Our DNA and our genetics are the fleshly aspect of our outer worldly life. This is just the order of this world. To be here one must live in a fleshly body with all the blessings and curses of DNA and genetics. The two, the flesh and the Spirit, must never be confused as one.

The science of the "flesh" is the science of the flesh. Science can be very helpful on so many different levels. Science is very important as it begins to reach depths of knowledge that can lead to more spiritual dimensions. We want science to be in our lives helping the "fleshly" part of our daily living. When we are ill we want science to help the "flesh" heal. There is nothing wrong with this, and in fact I have found that all science can lead to the spiritual as all spiritual can lead to science.

The Spirit is the spiritual and while it lives within the "flesh," it is not of the flesh. In other words, the Laws that govern the spiritual are not the same as the science of the "flesh." We live as a spiritual being first, that is contained in the body of a human being. Karma made all of this possible. Through Karma we take on the "flesh" to learn of the Spirit.

To the degree of one's understanding of all of this comes the character, modality and quality of a person's experience here on earth.

To not only understand, but also become aware of the Spirit that lives within this "flesh" is a profound and important awakening for any of us in this world.

Nicodemus was surprised by all of this, as he was seemingly looking for another kind of answer, and said to Jesus:

"How can this be?" Nicodemus asked.

Jesus then said: "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept my testimony. I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?"

Yes, so well stated. If Nicodemus (representing all of us humans) cannot understand the “earthly” explanations of how life works, how will he or any one of us become spiritually aware enough to awaken to the authentic meaning of Life and its intricacies past the logic of genetics and the reasoning of survival through DNA? It just can’t be done with a mind that is skeptical or literal—due to fear.

One would think that there must come a moment in our life where we seek something other than what our genetics can provide. But this is simply of no importance to the majority of people who incarnate into this world. For instance, the meaning of a lifetime to the Millennials and their parents is merely two things: **propagation and money**.

I find that many people, and especially the Millennials that have incarnated into this world, simply do not care if they find the essence of a lifetime—which is its most profound meaning. The descendants of these parents (typically born in the ‘70s and ‘80s) are simply to be entertained through fear and never to question themselves past their emotionality at any time throughout their life experience. Much as it was in the Middle Ages. (Hint)

The Millennials live to exist as *children* all of their lives. Many of them have trust funds that secure their financial future. I have one friend who is making sure that his grandchildren all are “secure” as he put it, so they do not have to struggle in this world when they become of age. He told me that he *loves* his family more than anything else in this world, which reproduces babies at an alarming rate (10 grandchildren in seven years) and has no other intent in this world but to propagate the family name, as he proudly told me. He then went on to tell me that he was overjoyed by his large family (while he boasts of being politically correct about overpopulation) while lecturing me on his personal belief that “...money is love.”

The Millennials’ main thrust in life, as I have seen for myself as well as read about, is to preserve their childhood for the rest of their lives—hence never growing up. Many of them simply live and breathe the Peter Pan Syndrome where they never want to, or believe that they have to, mature past their childlike desires. They are afraid of what life really might be and hide in their fantasies about their ideals; that life really has no meaning at all.

This cop-out is rampant in our country and is merely seeking to counter the fear that drives the human experience by adopting the philosophy that fear is good and must be accepted as a part of being here on earth; that fear’s ramifications can be reduced through pleasure.

One Millennial told me that he never considered that there was anything in this world other than this world! He told me that all he was looking for was fun. By the way, this young man was my stepson’s best friend. I knew him all during his high school years and I can tell you that he and his friends (including my stepson) all live this lifestyle of the Millennials. Their motto and philosophy for life is “Fun First,” and fun is defined as anything pleasurable, which includes using fear as entertainment. They all agree that there is nothing else, which I found out recently at a gathering of all of them in my home.

Behind all of this is fear. The fear of looking at the reality of life itself is just not in the genetics of their bodies so they, like many of us, simply don’t consider anything else. Being “god-fearing” is ridiculous (I agree) and may have worked on their parents and grandparents, but with all of the issues of their parents’ addictions (drugs and alcohol), the ol’ sex, drugs and rock ‘n roll mentality, we find that the new generation has simply become immune to Truth.

But we, in this world, all have our moments, moments where all of our philosophical beliefs come to an end and there is nothing but the reality of the moment. In these moments do we find the results of our fear upon the livingness of our lives and, of course, everything changes. Fear is no longer a matter of entertainment.

Even the Mullah Nasreddin learned this one! Ah, my closing story for you about our dear friend.

Once the Mullah Nasreddin got lost in a jungle. The whole day he tried to find a way out, but he could not -- tired, hungry, exhausted, bleeding, his clothes torn apart because the jungle was really thick and thorny. And it was getting darker, the sun was setting and the night was just about to come.

Nasreddin being an atheist, a confirmed atheist who had never prayed, now found himself in a position of fear that he had never been in before. But with the situation -- the fear of the night and the wild animals -- for the first time in his life he thought of God. He forgot all his arguments that he used to give against God.

He knelt down on the ground and he said, "Dear Lord...." although he looked around, a little embarrassed, knowing perfectly well that there was nobody, but still embarrassed -- the whole life's philosophy of atheism! But when fear knocks on the door and when death is so close by, who bothers about logic, philosophies, isms? Who bothers about reason, argument?

"Dear Lord," he said, "please help me get out of these woods, and I will always worship you. I will even start going to the mosque. I will follow all the rituals of Islam. I promise you! Just save me. Forgive me. I apologize for all the things that I have been saying against you. I was a fool, an utter fool. Now I know you are."

Just at that moment a bird passed overhead and dropped a blessing right on his outspread hands.

To this Nasreddin said, "Please Lord, don't give me any of that shit. I'm really afraid and lost!"

Yes, we are afraid and lost. We believe that we are not afraid if our emotions don't feel threatened at any particular moment. But when the opportunity comes and we are feeling threatened by someone or something in our lifetime that might displease or disrupt our emotionality—we fall to hate as a means to deal with our fears.

To realize that, **"The fear is not more than six inches deep"** is very important. To realize this is to come to the place where we can have the direct experience that Love is fearlessness. For this direct experience to occur we cannot be checking into our emotionality for our dose of daily hate. This means we cannot live in the duality of fear and Love. The "love" we induce through our senses is merely a form of fear typically masquerading through self-righteousness.

Authentic Love has no opposite. Authentic Love is the All of everything that is real. As we continue to live in the duality of being human or divine, we cause a chasm to exist that becomes our Karma in every life that we enter.

When we are done with duality and choose Love over fear we drop into non-duality, and hence our fears are no more because we learn how to live with the human and not as a

human. Every spiritual master who has ever come to us in order to help served this common purpose. That purpose being: **Love is more powerful than hate.**

It is Halloween and of course I so enjoy it. It is a time to celebrate fearlessness and embrace loving kindness as a lifestyle. Everything we do eventually becomes a lifestyle. Halloween can be used to help us understand that our fears are just six inches deep. Learning how to live with the human as a vehicle in this world is very important. It is the utter manifestation of our Karma in this world.

To dislike it is futile and to hate what it produces is foolish. To embrace its weakness and understand its purposes brings strength to our inner core. The human will never be Divine, but the Divine lives in the human and if we can come to be aware of this (not as some sort of belief) we can in Truth live beyond the facts of the body and live in the Love that we truly are.

May you have a fearless Halloween.

Enough of me for today...please forgive me.

Metta to you,

Swami Chaitanya Siraj

(Gregory Penn)

Copyright 2015, Gregory E. Penn. All rights reserved.